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Report of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee on its thirty-seventh session

Means and mechanisms for strengthening inter-agency cooperation and increasing the use of space applications and services within the United Nations system and among United Nations specialized agencies and bodies: draft list of questions to be circulated to organizations of the United Nations system

Note by the Secretariat

1. At its thirty-seventh session, held in Vienna from 7 to 18 February 2000, the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee of the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space endorsed (see A/AC.105/736, para. 123) the recommendation of its Working Group of the Whole, reconvened in accordance with General Assembly resolution 54/67 of 6 December 1999, that a new item, entitled "Means and mechanisms for strengthening inter-agency cooperation and increasing the use of space applications and services within the United Nations system and among United Nations specialized agencies and bodies", should be considered by the Subcommittee commencing with its thirty-eighth session, in 2001, according to the following three-year work plan:

2001 An analysis of the current levels of usage of space applications and services within the United Nations system, including one day for presentations by appropriate United Nations entities and Member States that undertake cooperative activities with those entities; and an examination of the utility of space applications and services for increasing, with regard to space activities,

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the effectiveness, efficiency and coordination of the operations of United Nations entities

2002 An identification of the barriers to greater use of space applications and services within the United Nations system and an examination of specific means and mechanisms to eliminate those barriers

2003 The development of specific and concrete proposals and, as appropriate, action plans for strengthening inter-agency cooperation in the use of space within the United Nations system and for increasing the use of space applications and services within the system in general and among particular United Nations entities

It was also agreed that the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at its forty-third session, should recommend to the General Assembly at its fifty-fifth session that it request all United Nations entities concerned to provide the Office for Outer Space Affairs with appropriate information in response to a list of questions that the Office would prepare for approval by the Committee at its forty-third session, with the objective of increasing the effectiveness, efficiency and coordination of the space activities of the agencies and bodies of the United Nations system.

2. A draft list of questions prepared by the Secretariat for approval by the Committee is contained in the annex to the present document.

Annex

Draft list of questions to be circulated to organizations of the United Nations system

A. General questions

1. What are the mandates of your organization?
2. What are the major objectives of your organization to be achieved within the next five years?

B. Status of the use of space science and technology

3. Does your organization utilize space-related science and technology and its applications to achieve its objectives? (If the answer is "NO", go on to question 7.)
4. The annual report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities within the United Nations system contains detailed information on activities planned for the following few years as provided by various organizations of the system. The latest report is contained in document A/AC.105/726. Does the report contain information on how your organization utilizes space applications in achieving its objectives? If not, please provide a brief description of how space applications are utilized by your organization.
5. Is your organization planning to expand the use of space applications in its activities? If the answer is "NO", please indicate why not and go on to question 11.
6. In which areas of activities does your organization plan to expand the use of space applications and what could be the obstacles to doing so? (Go on to question 11.)
7. **Please answer this question only if you answered "NO" to question 3**. The Third United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (UNISPACE III), held in Vienna in July 1999, identified, as reflected in its report (A/CONF.184/6), many areas of our daily activities where space science and technology can assist in the solution of problems of regional or global significance. Some of those areas are listed below for your reference. In which areas could the use of space applications assist your organization in achieving its objectives in an effective and efficient manner? (If the answer is "NONE", go on to question 11.)

   (a) Protecting the environment:

   (i) Enhancing scientific knowledge of Earth and its environment;

   (ii) Enhancing management of environment and natural resources:

      a. Weather and climate forecasting;

      b. Disaster management;

      c. Management of resources;

      d. Disease control and health services;

(b) Facilitating and utilizing communications;

(c) Improving and using positioning and location capabilities;

(d) Encouraging education and training in science and technology;

(e) Developing and strengthening information infrastructures.

8. What needs to be done in order to integrate space applications into the work programme of your organization in the areas that you identified under question 7 above?

9. Does your organization use space-related technologies, such as remote interpretation/translation and tele-conferencing, to improve its working methods? (If the answer is "YES", go on to question 11.)

10. What can be done to increase the cost-efficiency of the operation of your organization through the use of space-related technologies?

C. Capacity-building in promoting sustainable development

11. Does your organization carry out activities to strengthen capacities of its member States, in particular developing countries, to promote sustainable development and sustained economic growth? (If the answer is "NO", go on to question 14.)

12. As emphasized by UNISPACE III, the use of space science and technology contributes significantly to promoting sustainable development. Is the use of space science and technology addressed in the activities of your organization relating to capacity-building? (If the answer is "YES", go on to question 14.)

13. Why is the use of space science and technology not addressed in the activities of your organization relating to capacity-building? Is it because the mandates of your organization have little or no relevance to space-related activities, because your organization was not aware of the benefits of space science and technology for promoting sustainable development or for some other reason?

D. Promoting international cooperation through development of an international legal regime

14. Does your organization have mandates relating to the development/promotion of an international legal regime and/or international standards/recommended practices? (If the answer is "NO", go on to question 18.)

15. In which areas does your organization contribute to the development/promotion of an international legal regime and/or international standards/recommended practices?

16. Are space-related activities being covered or will they be covered in the foreseeable future? (If the answer is "NO", go on to question 18.)

17. How are space-related activities affected by the international legal regime and/or international standards/recommended practices being established/promoted through your organization?

E. Coordination of space-related activities within the United Nations system

18. The Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities meets once a year to coordinate space-related activities in order to avoid unnecessary duplication in planning future endeavours and to explore possibilities of carrying out ongoing and planned activities through joint inter-agency efforts. Its latest report is contained in document A/AC.105/727. The Inter-Agency Meeting also reviews and finalizes the report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities being planned by various organizations of the United Nations system. (The latest report of the Secretary-General is contained in document A/AC.105/726, as referred to in question 4.) Has your organization participated in the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities on a regular basis in recent years by attending the annual session and/or contributing to the annual report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of space-related activities? (If the answer is "YES", go on to question 21.)

19. Is your organization aware of space-related activities being undertaken by other organizations of the United Nations system and of efforts being made by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and its subsidiary bodies in the peaceful uses of outer space? If the answer is "YES", to what extent?

20. What are your reasons for not participating in the work of the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities?

21. On the basis of information provided in the latest report of the Secretary-General on the coordination of outer space activities (A/AC.105/726), in which of the following areas of activity could inter-agency coordination be enhanced further?

(a) *Education and training activities*:

(i) Remote sensing and geographic information systems (GIS);

(ii) Satellite communications;

(iii) Disaster management;

(iv) Other;

(b) *Operational activities*:

(i) Remote sensing and GIS;

(ii) Earth observation;

(iii) Climate research;

(iv) Meteorology and operational hydrology;

(v) Environment management (including activities relating to environment assessment, environment information systems and environment decision support systems);

(vi) Management of natural resources;

(vii) Development of information infrastructure;

(viii) Distance learning/education and tele-medicine;

(ix) Navigation satellite systems;

(x) Disaster management (including early warning, prevention, mitigation, relief and rehabilitation);

(xi) Other;

(c) *Dissemination of information*:

(i) Remote sensing and GIS;

(ii) Climate research;

(iii) Disaster management;

(iv) Space science and technology (general information);

(v) Other.

22. What could be the obstacles to enhancing inter-agency coordination in the areas of activity selected under question 21 above?

F. Opportunities for the future

23. In his report entitled "We the peoples: the role of the United Nations in the twenty-first century",[1] the Secretary-General proposed new initiatives to be taken for the twenty-first century for consideration by heads of State at the Millennium Summit, to be held from 6 to 8 September 2000. Space applications can make significant contributions to implementing some of the key proposals contained in the report, such as the establishment of a Health InterNetwork, a disaster response initiative and the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment. Is your organization interested in participating in activities that may be undertaken to implement some of these proposals with the use of space applications?

24. In addition to the activities being conducted through the Inter-Agency Meeting on Outer Space Activities, what actions could be taken and by whom in order for the United Nations system to strengthen inter-agency efforts to expand the benefits of space science and technology, in particular for sustainable development and sustained economic growth?

Notes

[1] United Nations publication, Sales No. E.00.I.16.